

District 3: Road and Bridge Report

Don Hawthorne, County Commissioner

The year ended on a sad and shocking note for us. Steve Ronio, a 20 year employee of District 3, was killed in a head on collision on Roger's Lane by a reckless driver. Steve was a very talented heavy equipment operator and has been sorely missed as we began the New Year.

Over the holidays, there was a pasture fire at 115 County Road and Coombs Road. Some of the guys were called out to put out a fire that had gotten into 100 or so round bales. If they are not broken up, round bales will smolder for a long time requiring a volunteer fireman to be on the scene for an extended period of time.

We began the year with snow and ice that got us out sanding the bridges, hills, and intersections on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of January, and again on the 14th.

We received funding from FEMA to mitigate two areas that continually washed out. One was on Wolf Road where there were three steel pipes for cross drains. FEMA provided funding to put in larger tin horns to accommodate the runoff, and in the last big rain it proved to be successful.

The other was what we call Johnson's Crossing on 287, which is on the Kiowa-Comanche County line. This is a low water crossing that was regularly damaged as the result of heavy rains in the mountains. FEMA provided funding to increase the size and number of tin horns that would handle the runoff.

While we were in the area, the guys took out an old bridge located on Wolf Road east of 287 and replaced it with a tinhorn.

As per an agreement with ODOT and the Mayor of Medicine Park, we put new runners on the truss bridge that goes into the town. The bridge was built over a hundred years ago, and adds to the historical look of Medicine Park.

We are still waiting on BIA's approval on the easement acquisition for the right of way on the west side for a new bridge on Airport Road a half mile south of Cache Road. The easement for the east side was purchased and utilities were moved last summer.

Because of slow processing of the documents through that agency, this project has been delayed a year. We were hoping for an April letting of the construction bid so we would have the bridge completed by the time school started next year so the school buses could use that road.

The road crew has recycled and prepared McIntosh from SH 58 to Chibitty, and Chibitty north to the dead end. This road is ready to be oiled and chipped this summer.

The crew will begin work on Indianahoma Road from Woodlawn to the Baseline, and Baseline Road from SH 36 to 112th Street. These two roads will be oiled and chipped later this summer as well.

On our bridges, particularly located on major collectors, vehicles crowd the center line and it wears off the center stripe faster. Road Foreman Kenny Kinder located some plastic reflectors that can be glued on the center line making it more visible at night.

He also located some flexible plastic tubing that has reflecting tape to mark the guard rail on bridges. Being flexible, farm equipment won't bend or break them and they remain highly visible at night.

We continue to help the schools and municipalities in our District. Cache High preparing for baseball season needed some dirt and gravel for the ball field. The Fairground Road in Indiahoma was graded before the start of their stock show. We also provided Chatty FFA some screenings before the start of their stock show. We also hauled some dirt for Indiahoma School to fill in where the rain had washed some dirt away from their buildings.

To take advantage of the rainy day weather when the guys could not be out in the District working, Foreman Kenny Kinder had them gather and sell our old scrap iron, mostly rusted out tin horns. State law allows us to sell scrap iron if we get three telephone bids. The effort got us over \$2,500 to add back into our Maintenance and Operation Fund.

If you have questions or concerns I can be contacted at don.hawthorne@comanchecounty.us or you may phone the County Barn at 580-429-3217 or the Courthouse office at 580-353-3717.